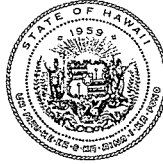


Neil Abercrombie  
GOVERNOR



KATHRYN MATAYOSHI  
INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT

STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
**W. R. Farrington High School**  
1564 North King Street  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96817

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HONOLULU, HAWAII

Dear Council Member Ernest Martin,

On behalf of Wallace Rider Farrington High School, Principal Al Carganilla, students, parents and staff, I am writing to you about **Grant-In-Aid amendment, Bill 11 (2013), CD2, and Adult Friends for Youth.**

We just completed a hard and difficult school year. Our auditorium roof collapsed, our school year was marred with many fights which involved our student in gangs, some occurring on campus, some off campus, but eventually we, the school had to deal with it all. Without AFY and their social workers, many issues that were at the core of the fighting would not have been resolved. Unfortunately, some of the students causing the fights were moved to an alternative education setting, but if not for AFY, I am quite sure administration would have had no choice but to find alternatives for more of these students.

Adult Friends for Youth has long roots here at Farrington High School, and for many years serviced our at risk group of students, especially those affiliated with gangs. As you know we are centrally located in the heart of Kalihi serving and educating a student population of 2,450. Approximately 60% of our students are on free or reduced lunch, meaning they fall below the poverty standard of Hawaii. Most of our students come from 6 Federal Housing Projects in our district. With that being said, for years there has been a stigma associated with Farrington High School and one of them has been active gangs in our school.

It's too easy to ignore this fact and hammer away, suspend, and expel our students for delinquent behavior, fighting, and constant "power struggle" within the community and school. Gangs in Hawaii are very real, are active, and we experience this on a daily basis. What the ordinary person sees as simple Kalihi neighborhoods, we know of and have knowledge of the different territories, areas that certain students, ex students, and adults claim as their "turf" or "hang out spots." As bleak and frightening as it may sound, I have to say, my tenure here as Vice Principal, I have yet to find a more rewarding life and experience than serving and supporting our students affiliated with gangs. For the most part take away the bravado, take away their sense of pride, and roots, and you will find a loving, respecting, and intelligent young man and woman wanting to be helped. They just don't know how to get that help.

I have worked with Debbie Spencer, Mo Maumalanga, Mack Schwenke, and Adult Friends for Youth for over 5 years, and I have never seen in my service as educator, coach, and administrator (23 years) a more effective, comprehensive, and precise social service than Adult Friends for Youth who deal specifically with gangs. They are unique. They specifically mentor, counsel, listen to, and gain the respect from their clients. I am not by any means discarding all other social and health agencies in our community because Farrington High School is partnered with many quality programs in our community, but what I am saying is that Gangs are their specialty. How many of us have the time (24 hours on call), willing to give the effort, and have open doors (a life

time), to any of AFY's clients, present and former gang members? AFY has the experience, gained the respect of, and successfully helped many of our students affiliated with gangs. AFY is, for many of our gang members, the only link to higher education (college), jobs, services, and a place of resource.

I am asking each of you to truly consider the continued funding of AFY. I cannot imagine life here at Farrington High School without AFY. Without AFY, our school and in the bigger picture, our community will be negatively affected, and eventually the sad fact is that many of our youth will be heading down the path of destruction, drug use, and prison.

Without AFY, our students who are in gangs will not have this outlet provided for them.

I truly appreciate your time to read my letter. It is so important to us.

Sincerely,

Ronald Oyama  
Vice Principal, Wallace Rider Farrington High School